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ABSTRACT

Ninth grade and twelfth grade social studies students in Mounds View, Minnesota, were surveyed for their impressions of American Indians. Intended predominantly for use by teachers in developing curriculum for teaching about Indian people, the report is presented in two sections--an information test and an attitude survey. In section I, each of 44 information questions is considered separately and responses by the 986 ninth grade students and 632 twelfth grade students are compared. A summary of student responses indicates that students could correctly answer less than half the questions and that twelfth graders scored better than ninth graders on 36 of the 44 questions. In the section on attitudes, students were asked to respond to 26 statements. Students of both grades responded positively toward Indian people, with a high correlation between higher scores on information questions and more positive attitudes. The conclusion is offered that a realistic portrayal of Native Americans should be incorporated into the curriculum to counteract social stereotypes, textbook distortions, and media influence. Limitations of the study are identified, including the suburban nature of the sample and differing abilities and attitudes of the students. A bibliography, instructions for administering the survey, and a copy of the survey are included. (Author/DB)

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YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONCEPTS OF NATIVE AMERICANS

A Survey of Suburban Ninth and Twelfth Grade Students

SO 009 233

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

NEW BRIGHTON, MINNESOTA

April, 1976

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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INTRODUCTION

How much do suburban young people know about American Indian people and what are their attitudes toward them? These questions kept recurring to the Human Resources Committee of the League of Women Voters of New Brighton while pursuing a year-long study of the situation of Native Americans. To find at least a partial answer to these questions, the committee conducted a survey in the Mounds View School District in the Fall of 1974.

Students in kindergarten and grades five, nine, and twelve were questioned on knowledge and attitudes regarding American Indians. Kindergarten and fifth grade pupils were interviewed individually on 12 questions about Indian people. The results of that survey are treated in a separate publication.[1]

A 71 question written survey was developed to assess knowledge and determine attitudes of ninth and twelfth grade students. The results of the survey are the basis for this publication. Because no other inventory of this type has been done in our schools, it is hoped that the information obtained will be useful to teachers in planning and implementing Native American studies.

1. League of Women Voters of New Brighton, Children's Impressions of American Indians, 1975.

METHOD

Questions were developed by using published reference materials and by consulting with many people, including a high school teacher of Native American studies, Indian residents of the community, and the American Indian Studies Department at the University of Minnesota. All the questions are documented and the sources used are included in the appendix. The criteria used in selecting the questions and developing the survey form were:

1) Items should be easily read and understood by both 9th and 12th grade students;

2) Many different areas of Indian studies should be included;

3) Factual data should be adequately documented;

4) Students should be able to complete the survey in a reasonable amount of time.

Every junior and senior high school within the school district participated in the survey. The survey form was distributed by departmental chairmen to individual social studies teachers. To ensure uniformity, written instructions for administering the survey were given to the teachers. (See appendix.) All ninth and twelfth grade students who were present in social studies classes on the day of testing were included. A total of 986 ninth graders (80% of the total population) and 623 twelfth graders (60% of the total population) completed the survey.

The analysis was based on the percentage of correct responses given for each item and on the mean (average) scores for both ninth and twelfth grade students. Two types of statistics were used. A *t*-test based on the difference between the mean (average) scores was computed. The Pearson Product-Moment

Correlation was used to assess the degree of correlation between knowledge of and attitudes toward American Indians for each grade level surveyed. The percentage results given for each item in the tables may not total 100% because of non-valid responses. No comparisons between schools were made. Results are the composite totals of ninth and twelfth grade students from the four junior high and two senior high schools in the Mounds View School District.

LIMITATIONS

This study is subject to all the limitations which apply to any written survey of a limited (i.e. suburban Midwest) population. Results may have been influenced by the reading abilities of the students and their attitudes toward the survey.

Furthermore, although the most reliable sources available were used to document each question, some statistics and even some events in history may be subject to debate.

Finally, even with a carefully designed instrument, it is extremely difficult to measure peoples' attitudes toward other people.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The survey given to the students consists of two parts. Part I contains questions and statements of information about Indian people which were to be answered true, false, or I don't know. Part II, which was given separately, assesses attitudes toward Native Americans. It was answered on a continuum of five responses from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The survey as it

was given to the students is included in the appendix. In the tables of the following report information and attitude items are rearranged in categories of related information.

Sections A, B, and C deal with the results of Part I of the survey which tested the amount of information which students displayed about Indian people. Section A reports on items of an historical nature; Section B deals with those covering contemporary facts. Section C compares the performance of ninth and twelfth graders on all of Part I.

Part II gives the results of that portion of the survey which sought to determine students' attitudes about Native Americans. Part III presents the results of a correlation study of the relationship between performance on Parts I and II, that is to say, between information and attitudes. The final section of the report consists of a concluding summary and discussion of the entire survey.

The appendix includes a bibliography, the survey as it was administered to the students, instructions given to teachers conducting the survey, and graphs showing the statistical results of ninth and twelfth grade students.

PART I

Section A

INFORMATION ABOUT INDIAN PEOPLE IN HISTORY

The historical section of the survey contains nineteen questions in five categories: individual Indian people in history, Indian-white conflict, Indian contributions, U.S. Indian policy, and Indian culture of the past.

Individual Indian people in history

The lowest scores by both ninth and twelfth grade students came in response to the three questions about individual Indian people in history. Less than one-fifth of the students in either group knew about Sequoyah, Chief Joseph, or Susan LaFlesche Picotte.

Indian-white conflict

The highest scores by both grades (89% and 92%) in the historical section were obtained in response to the statement, "In the past, Indians fought against whites to protect their own land." However, students indicated less knowledge on the other three questions dealing with Indian-white conflict. Fewer than 60% of the students correctly answered about mistreatment of Indians by whites.

Indian contributions

Students did not perform consistently in the category of contributions. Scores indicated that many (69% and 71%) of the students recognized the contributions Indians have made in agriculture. However, by contrast, relatively few (19% and 25%) are aware of the contributions by Indians to our form of government.

U.S. Indian policy

Over one-half of the ninth graders and 78% of the seniors indicated they know that the government hasn't kept most of its treaties with the Indians. Students demonstrated less knowledge on other aspects of U.S. Indian policy such as Indian sovereignty, Andrew Jackson's removal policy, and forced assimilation of Indians into American society by means of boarding schools and the Allotment Act. One-half or fewer of either group of students could give the correct answer when responding to items concerned with these issues.

Indian culture of the past

Seniors did considerably better than ninth graders on items about Indian culture of the past. Even their performance, however, was inconsistent. While 85% of the seniors recognized language differences among tribes, other differences, such as the diversity of Indian subsistences and life styles, were not acknowledged. For instance, a surprising number of students incorrectly thought most Indian tribes in the past were buffalo hunters and that Indians roamed around, never settling in one place.

Summary

As a group, students demonstrated little knowledge of historical information about Native Americans. On 13 of the 19 questions, less than half of the ninth graders made correct responses. Grade 12 overall performance was somewhat better, yet less than half the sample was able to provide the correct responses for 8 of the 19 questions. Only three of the historical questions, those dealing with the differences of languages among Indian

tribes, the contributions of Indian people to our present food supply, and the struggle of Indians to protect their lands from white people, were answered correctly by more than two-thirds of both groups.

While the choice of the "I don't know" response indicates lack of knowledge, the selection of the wrong answer may reflect misconceptions and inaccurate information regarding Native Americans. Given the possibility of selecting the "I don't know" alternative, the number of students from both grades who marked the wrong answer is fairly high (18% -31%) on five of the items on historical information. This seems to indicate that these students might hold one or more of the following misconceptions:

1. Indians had an uncivilized way of life before Europeans came to America;
2. In the past, Indians roamed about without ever living in one place;
3. Most Indian tribes in the past were buffalo hunters;
4. Indian nations were not considered sovereign by the U.S. Constitution; and
5. In the past, boarding schools encouraged the study of Indian language and culture.

Table 1: Part I - Section A. Information about Indian people in history. Ninth grade results are listed over twelfth grade results (Line 1). The correct response is underlined.

Item	True	False	I don't know	Difference* 9 - 12
Contributions to American Life				
1. Much of the food we eat today was first domesticated and grown by American Indians.	69% 71%	11% 14%	20% 15%	+ 2%
2. The government of the Iroquois may have had an influence on the beginnings of the U.S. govt.	19% 25%	9% 9%	70% 65%	+ 6%

Item	True	False	I don't know	Difference* 9 - 12
United States Indian Policy				
3. When it was written, the U.S. Constitution recognized Indian tribes as sovereign, separate nations.	21% 20%	22% 29%	56% 50%	- 1%
4. One of the results of the Allotment Act of 1887 was that Indians lost much of their land.	38% 40%	8% 4%	52% 55%	+ 2%
5. The U.S. government has kept most of its treaties with the Indians.	21% 9%	52% 78%	26% 13%	+26%
6. Boarding schools for Indian children in the past encouraged the study of Indian language and culture.	28% 18%	28% 50%	43% 31%	+22%
7. President Andrew Jackson did much to help the Indians.	14% 12%	13% 22%	71% 66%	+9%
Indian Culture of the Past				
8. Indians had an uncivilized way of life before Europeans came to America.	24% 21%	49% 66%	26% 12%	+17%
9. In the past, Indians roamed around, never settling in one place.	44% 26%	37% 61%	18% 11%	+24%
10. Most Indian tribes in the past were buffalo hunters.	56% 31%	27% 59%	17% 9%	+32%
11. In the past, Indians spoke the same language.	14% 7%	67% 85%	19% 8%	+18%
12. The first Americans have always called themselves "Indians."	16% 13%	48% 58%	35% 28%	+10%
Indian-White Conflict				
13. In the past, Indians fought against whites to protect their own land.	89% 92%	5% 5%	5% 2%	+ 3%
14. Colonists in the 17th and 18th centuries were paid money for Indian scalps.	40% 58%	15% 8%	45% 33%	+18%

Item	True	False	I don't know	Difference* 9 - 12
15. The Battle of Wounded Knee in 1890 was a massacre of Dakotah Sioux men, women, and children by American soldiers.	53% 59%	15% 11%	32% 29%	+ 6%
16. Bad treatment by whites was a major cause of the 1862 Sioux uprising in Minnesota.	53% 59%	11% 8%	35% 33%	+ 6%
Indian Individuals in History				
17. Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce cooperated with the government in moving his tribe to the reservation.	8% 8%	13% 12%	77% 80%	- 1%
18. Sequoyah developed the Cherokee alphabet.	18% 18%	11% 7%	70% 74%	0
19. Susan LaFlesche Picotte was the first Indian woman to become a medical doctor.	13% 14%	7% 3%	79% 83%	+ 1%

*In order to compare 9th grade performance with 12th grade performance on each item, the 9th grade percentage correct was subtracted from the 12th grade percentage correct. This comparison between 9th and 12th grade students is discussed in more detail on page 15.

PART I

Section B

INFORMATION ABOUT INDIAN PEOPLE TODAY

This section of the survey includes 25 questions in six categories: general information, traditionalism, health problems, information about specific tribes and groups, contemporary economic situation, and Indian values.

General information

Students gave the highest number of correct responses to questions of general information about Indian people today. Over 80% of the ninth graders and 90% or more of the seniors knew that Indians are citizens of the United States; that they live in Minnesota now; and that they do not live exclusively on reservations. However, three-fourths of the seniors answered incorrectly that most Indian children who live on reservations attend government boarding schools.

Traditionalism

The category of traditionalism also received correct responses from more than half of both groups of students. In fact, a high percentage recognized that some American Indians wish to keep their traditional way of life. Considerably fewer, however, realized that some Indian people also want to stay on the reservation.

Specific tribes and groups
Health problems

Lowest scores by both groups were obtained on two categories of items, one which called for knowledge of specific groups of Indians and the other

which dealt with health problems facing the Native American population today. In fact, on only one of the eight questions in these categories, did more than one-third of the students give the correct answer. Apparently such contemporary issues as fishing rights in Washington state and the termination of the Menominee tribe in Wisconsin are unfamiliar to the students. Furthermore, only one-third of the seniors indicated they knew that the Ottawa and Menominee are not the major Indian tribes living in Minnesota today.

Although both grades did poorly on questions related to health problems, considerably more seniors than ninth graders knew that the suicide rate for Indian people is not the same as for non-Indians and more seniors also knew of the younger average age of death for Indians.

Contemporary economic situation
Indian values

Performance by both ninth and twelfth grade students are inconsistent in these two remaining categories, the contemporary economic situation of Indians and Indian values. For example, a fair number of seniors indicated some understanding of the problems of unemployment (79%) and low income (46%) that affect Indian people, but only 19% indicated a knowledge of their tax status or the role of the Federal government with respect to Indian people on reservations. Almost three-fourths or more of both grades recognized the importance of family and the land to Native Americans. However, more than one-half indicated no awareness of the fact that many Indian people value sharing and avoid disciplining by physical punishment.

Summary

Performance on these questions about Indian people today varied according to the type of information requested. Less than one-half of either group, however, gave correct responses to a majority of the questions. On 15 of the 25 questions, less than one-half of the ninth grade students could provide the correct responses. Although the twelfth graders did slightly better, less than one-half of them could give the correct answer to 13 of the 25 questions. Seven of the questions were answered correctly by more than two-thirds of both groups.

If students were uncertain about the answer to any item, they had the option of responding "I don't know", thus eliminating the need to guess. Therefore, the high number of wrong responses (18% - 38%) to seven items in this section of the survey may indicate that students answering incorrectly hold the following misconceptions about Indian people today:

1. Indians who live on reservations do not pay taxes;
2. Indians who live on reservations automatically get money from the government each month;
3. Indians live as long as everyone else;
4. There are fewer Indians every year;
5. Most children who live on reservations attend government boarding schools;
6. The Yakimas do not have fishing rights off the reservation; and
7. There are reservations in Minnesota besides Red Lake where the land is totally owned by the tribe.

Table 2: Part I - Section B. Information about Indian people today. Ninth grade results are listed over twelfth grade results (Line 1). The correct response is underlined.

Item	True	False	I don't know	Difference* 9 - 12
General Information About Indians Today				
1. Indians live in Minnesota now.	<u>83%</u>	11%	5%	+ 9%
	<u>92%</u>	6%	2%	
2. Indians live only on reservations now.	11%	<u>84%</u>	4%	+12%
	3%	<u>96%</u>	1%	
3. American Indians are citizens of the United States.	<u>81%</u>	5%	14%	+ 9%
	<u>90%</u>	4%	6%	
4. Most Indian children who live on reservations today attend government boarding schools.	37%	<u>16%</u>	46%	+ 9%
	38%	<u>25%</u>	36%	
Indian Values				
5. Indians like to share what they have with each other.	<u>49%</u>	9%	42%	- 5%
	<u>44%</u>	14%	41%	
6. The family life is very important to Indians.	<u>75%</u>	6%	19%	+ 6%
	<u>81%</u>	5%	13%	
7. The land is very important in American Indian religion.	<u>70%</u>	5%	25%	+11%
	<u>81%</u>	4%	15%	
8. Indians spank their children a lot for disobeying.	6%	<u>36%</u>	57%	+ 8%
	4%	<u>44%</u>	52%	
9. Some Indians feel the tribe, not the individual, should own the land.	<u>55%</u>	8%	36%	+12%
	<u>67%</u>	4%	28%	
Traditionalism				
10. Some American Indians do not speak English.	<u>66%</u>	12%	22%	+ 6%
	<u>72%</u>	14%	14%	
11. Some American Indians want to stay on the reservation.	<u>53%</u>	14%	32%	+11%
	<u>64%</u>	9%	27%	
12. Some American Indians wish to keep their traditional way of life.	<u>84%</u>	5%	11%	+ 8%
	<u>92%</u>	2%	6%	
Contemporary Economic Situation				
13. The unemployment rate for Indians today is about the same as for non-Indians.	8%	<u>62%</u>	30%	+17%
	4%	<u>79%</u>	17%	

Items	True	False	I don't know	Difference* 9 - 12
14. Indians who live on reservations do not pay taxes.	21% 25%	20% 19%	58% 55%	- 1%
15. Most reservations are located on land good for farming.	26% 12%	44% 69%	29% 18%	+25%
16. Indians who live on a reservation automatically get money from the government every month.	34% 31%	17% 19%	49% 49%	+ 2%
17. Indians living on reservations in Minnesota today have an average income of less than $1,000 apiece.	27% 46%	10% 6%	61% 48%	+19%
Health Problems Today				
18. Every year there are fewer Indian people in America.	27% 27%	21% 21%	51% 51%	0
19. The average age of death for Indians is 45 years.	11% 33%	32% 21%	56% 46%	+22%
20. The suicide rate for Indians today is about the same as for non-Indians.	15% 8%	31% 56%	53% 35%	+25%
Information About Specific Tribes/Groups				
21. The major Indian tribes living in Minnesota today are the Ottawa and Menominee.	18% 13%	25% 33%	57% 53%	+ 8%
22. Eskimoes of Alaska can receive benefits from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.	29% 33%	11% 8%	60% 58%	+ 4%
23. The Yakimas of Washington have the right to fish without a license on off-reservation land.	16% 13%	22% 20%	61% 67%	- 3%
24. Termination of federal aid to the Menominee tribe was a success.	11% 7%	14% 14%	75% 78%	0
25. Red Lake Reservation is the only reservation in Minnesota where the land is totally owned by the tribe.	15% 18%	16% 18%	69% 62%	+ 3%

*In order to compare 9th grade performance with 12th grade performance on each item, the 9th grade percentage correct was subtracted from the 12th grade percentage correct. This comparison between 9th and 12th grade students is discussed in more detail on page 15. 19

PART I

Section C

COMPARISON OF 9TH AND 12TH GRADE ON INFORMATION SECTIONS A & B

One reason for surveying both ninth and twelfth grades was to allow comparison of the amount of knowledge demonstrated by those beginning and those finishing high school.

Comparison of mean scores of ninth and twelfth grade

A t - test on the mean (average) scores of ninth and twelfth grade students indicated that twelfth graders did significantly better than ninth graders on the information section of the survey form.

Table 3: A comparison of 9th with 12th grade mean scores: Information Section

Group	Number	Standard Deviation	Mean Score	t
9th Grade	986	6.4084	18.43	12.68*
12th Grade	623	6.5377	22.64	

*Significant beyond the 0.001 level

Comparison of ninth and twelfth grade scores on individual items

Seniors scored better than ninth graders on all but 8 of the 44 informational questions.[1] On 17 questions, the difference between the two grades was judged to be considerable; that is, 10% to 32% more seniors than ninth graders answered correctly. The following is a list of the items, by category, on which seniors did considerably better than ninth graders.

1. Figures indicating differences between 9th and 12th grade achievements on all items are reported in Tables 1 and 2.

Indian culture of the past:

Indians had an uncivilized way of life before Europeans came to America.

In the past, Indians roamed around, never settling in one place.

Most Indian tribes in the past were buffalo hunters.

In the past, Indians spoke the same language.

The first Americans have always called themselves "Indians."

United States Indian policy:

The U.S. government has kept most of its treaties with the Indians.

Boarding schools for Indian children in the past encouraged the study of Indian language and culture.

Indian-white conflict in history:

Colonists in the 17th and 18th centuries were paid money for Indian scalps.

General information about Indians today:

Indians live only on reservations now.

Indian values:

The land is very important in American Indian religion.

Some Indians feel the tribe, not the individual, should own the land.

Traditionalism:

Some American Indians want to stay on the reservation.

Health problems today:

The average age of death for Indians is 45 years.

The suicide rate for Indians today is about the same as for non-Indians.

On three questions there was no difference between the two classes; that is, the same percentage of ninth as twelfth graders had the correct answer. These questions were about the man Sequoyah, termination of federal aid to the Menominee tribe, and the fact that the Indian population is increasing.

Ninth graders did better than seniors on these five questions:

When it was written, the U.S. Constitution recognized Indian tribes as sovereign, separate nations.
Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce cooperated with the government in moving his tribe to the reservation.
Indians like to share what they have with each other.
Indians who live on reservations do not pay taxes.
The Yakimas of Washington have the right to fish without a license on off-reservation land.

It should be noted that although on many questions one of the classes outperforms the other, often neither group actually scores very well. For example, on all of Sections A and B which deal with information about the history and contemporary concerns of Indian people, one-half or more of the seniors surveyed could not give the correct answer to 48% of the items.

PART II

ATTITUDES ABOUT AMERICAN INDIANS

The attitude section of the survey consists of 26 statements with which students could agree, disagree, or indicate uncertainty. On the following table, the asterisk indicates which end of the continuum was considered to indicate a positive attitude. Two statements (nos. 11, 26) were assigned neither positive nor negative values. For purposes of analysis, on each question "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" were added together as were "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree." The attitude section contains four categories: American Indians and society, Indian values and culture, American Indians in history, and current issues.

American Indians and society:

Students tended to be positive in their attitudes toward Indians as people in our society and expressed a willingness to learn more about them. Most of the students did not support the present-day stereotypes of Indian people as drunk, lazy, or unintelligent. The highest number of positive responses for both grades (84% and 90%) was given to the item, "Going to school with Indians would be o.k. with me." However, at the same time, about one-half of the students expressed uncertainty about whether Indians make good neighbors.

Indian values and cultures

The statement that Indians have many values which would be useful to all people was agreed to by over three-fourths of both ninth and twelfth grade students. However, only one-half of the students also felt Indians

should not try to be like successful whites. Do students perceive the great difference between Indian values and those of the dominant society?

American Indians in history

Students' responses tended to reflect a positive attitude toward Indian people in history. A significant number of both classes (over 70%) felt Indians have contributed much to American life. They also did not agree with the statement that it was good that white settlers took over Indian land.

However, not all students correctly rejected the image of Indians portrayed in many history books. In fact, more than one-fourth of the students did not refute the statement describing Indians as "savage."

Current issues

The attitudes of students about current issues tended to be less positive and also more uncertain than in other categories. For example, almost one-fifth of the seniors disagreed that non-Indians should have to pay a special fee to hunt or fish on Indian reservations. More than one-third of the seniors were uncertain as to whether the United States should honor treaties and whether there was good reason for the protest at Wounded Knee in 1973.

Summary

Both ninth and twelfth graders tended to give responses which were positive. On 17 of these 24 items, 50% or more of the students responded with a positive attitude. Looking at individual items, seniors tended to be more positive in their responses than did ninth graders. On more than one-half the statements 70% or more of the seniors showed positive attitudes. Ninth graders showed such a positive response on only six of these same items. However, a

t - test on a sampling of one-fifth of the students indicated no significant improvement in the mean (average) attitude score between ninth and twelfth grade students (t = 1.3406).

Responses to six items showed a considerable difference (15% or more) in positive attitude between ninth and twelfth graders. The greatest amount of difference occurred with respect to the image of Indian people portrayed in history books. More than one-fourth more seniors than ninth graders agreed that many history books do not portray a true picture of American Indians. Considerably more seniors than ninth graders realized that many treaties were unjust to Indians, that Indian culture exists today, that Indian people should be able to choose their own lifestyle, and that they were willing to learn more about American Indians.

Table 3: Part II. Results of attitude section of American Indian survey. Ninth grade results are listed over twelfth grade results (Line 1). * indicates the end of the continuum considered a "positive" response.

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
American Indians in History						
1. "Savage Indian" is a good way to describe Indians of the past.	6% 5%	11% 8%	22% 15%	37% 40%	23% 31%	*
2. Indians have contributed much to American life.	32% 33%	42% 50%	19% 12%	3% 2%	2% 2%	*
3. Treaties made with Indians were fair and just.	4% 3%	9% 4%	28% 16%	31% 33%	26% 42%	*
4. Since Indians made poor use of the land, it was good the white settlers took it over.	4% 3%	6% 5%	15% 9%	29% 33%	44% 49%	*
5. Most history books present a true picture of the Indian.	5% 4%	18% 7%	33% 20%	28% 38%	14% 30%	*

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
American Indians and Society						
6. Going to school with Indians would be o.k. with me.	50%	34%	11%	2%	2%	
	* 53%	37%	6%	2%	2%	
7. Indians drop out from school because they aren't smart enough to get through.	3%	6%	15%	33%	41%	
	2%	4%	8%	37%	48%	*
8. Indians make good neighbors.	* 16%	28%	48%	3%	3%	
	11%	24%	56%	3%	4%	
9. Most Indians are drunk and lazy.	5%	7%	14%	27%	45%	
	4%	5%	13%	34%	42%	*
10. There is less prejudice against Indians in Minnesota than in South Dakota.	6%	13%	67%	8%	4%	
	3%	13%	70%	11%	2%	*
11. Most people don't like Indians very much.	8%	25%	46%	17%	4%	
	6%	30%	46%	15%	2%	
12. I need to understand more about the American Indian.	* 26%	38%	20%	8%	4%	
	39%	41%	9%	5%	4%	
13. I already know enough about the American Indian.	6%	11%	22%	40%	18%	
	3%	6%	15%	46%	27%	*
14. I don't care if I ever hear more about the Indian.	6%	7%	18%	29%	33%	
	6%	5%	9%	34%	41%	*
Indian Values and Culture						
15. Indians have many values which would be useful to all people.	* 33%	41%	18%	3%	3%	
	36%	46%	13%	2%	2%	
16. There is no such thing as Indian culture today.	3%	8%	32%	35%	20%	
	2%	4%	20%	48%	24%	*
17. Indians should preserve their cultural life-style.	* 20%	39%	31%	5%	3%	
	28%	42%	22%	3%	3%	
18. Indians should try to be like successful whites.	8%	20%	31%	27%	11%	
	5%	14%	25%	33%	21%	*
Current Issues						
19. I don't like the U.S. government having to keep treaties 100 years old.	7%	8%	42%	21%	20%	
	6%	7%	34%	26%	25%	*

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
20. I don't like the government spending money fixing up reservations when Indians just let their homes fall apart.	7% 6%	13% 13%	20% 20%	30% 34%	27% 24%	*
21. Non-Indians should pay a fee to Indians to hunt or fish on Indian reservations.	22% 23%	30% 39%	24% 17%	13% 12%	8% 7%	*
22. The Indians had good reason to make trouble at Wounded Knee in 1973.	17% 14%	24% 27%	42% 39%	9% 10%	6% 7%	*
23. Indians should be forced to give up the coal and oil on their reservations because of the energy crisis.	6% 4%	10% 8%	25% 22%	32% 38%	24% 26%	*
24. It's good that it is against the law in some areas to sell liquor to Indians.	7% 5%	13% 12%	33% 27%	27% 34%	18% 19%	*
25. The Indian problem will settle itself without our worrying about it.	4% 2%	6% 4%	23% 15%	37% 41%	27% 36%	*
26. Indians should move to the city rather than stay on reservations.	7% 3%	19% 10%	47% 53%	16% 20%	9% 12%	

PART III

CORRELATION OF PARTS I AND II INFORMATION WITH ATTITUDE

One objective of this study was to determine whether there is any correlation between the amount of information a student has and his attitude toward Native Americans. A random sampling of 20% (114 seniors and 194 ninth graders) of the survey population was used to make this comparison.

Attitudes were rated on a continuum, with the most positive score equaling five points and the least positive equaling one point. A "Strongly Agree" or "Strongly Disagree" was scored one or five depending upon the question, "Agree" or "Disagree" was scored two or four depending upon the question, and "Uncertain" was scored three. By summing these points, an attitude score was computed for each individual which was then compared with his score on the information section of the survey.

The Pearson Product-Moment Coefficient of Correlation was used to assess the degree of correlation between information about and attitudes toward American Indians for each grade level surveyed. Results are reported in the following table.

Table 4: Comparison of information scores with attitude scores

Grade Level	Pearson P-M Correlation Coefficient*
Grade Nine	+0.2884
Grade Twelve	+0.3564

* A correlation coefficient of +1.00 would indicate a perfect positive relationship where a nigher information score would always correspond to a more positive attitude. A coefficient of -1.00 would indicate a perfect negative correlation where a higher information score would always correspond to a more negative attitude toward Native Americans as measured by the survey instrument.

There was a positive correlation between attitudes and knowledge at each level; $r = 0.2884$ for grade nine, and $r = 0.3564$ for grade twelve. This suggests that students who had higher scores on information questions tended to demonstrate more positive attitudes.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this survey was to assess knowledge and attitudes that junior and senior high school students have with respect to Native Americans. Hopefully, the results presented will help identify the learning needs of students.

Summary of survey results

Part I of the survey instrument was designed to test knowledge about Native Americans, both historical and contemporary. The items on the survey were chosen to cover information thought to be basic to an understanding of Native American people today. Results of this part of the survey indicate that students need to learn much more about Native Americans. One-half or more of the ninth grade students could not give the correct answer to 28 of the 44 items (64%); over one-half of the seniors surveyed could not give the correct answer to 21 of the 44 items (48%) in this section of the survey.

Mean (average) scores were compared with those of ninth graders. Results of a *t* - test indicated that seniors did significantly better than ninth graders on the information section of the survey. However, when compared on individual items seniors do as high as 32% better on some items; on three items there was no difference at all; and on five items ninth graders did better than seniors.

It is interesting to note that even on some questions which call for very basic information about Indian people today (that is, that they are citizens of the United States, live in Minnesota today, and do not live exclusively on reservations) a number of students (as high as 19%) chose the wrong response

or "I don't know." Also, a large number of students (over one-fifth) agreed with the statement that Indians had an uncivilized way of life before Europeans came to America.

Performance was notably poor on questions which called for information about specific tribes or groups of Indian people today or about specific people or events in history. This might be expected, since items of general information are naturally easier to recall. However, this seems to indicate a need for more stress on some of the great Indian leaders and the specific events which brought Native Americans to their present situation in our country. Furthermore, knowledge of specific values and achievements of Native Americans as well as their problems and struggles is basic to understanding Indian people today.

Part II of the survey was designed to assess the attitudes of the students toward Native Americans. When responding to an attitude question a student might have chosen the most "acceptable" answer rather than reveal his true attitude. It is encouraging, however, that students tended to be positive in their attitudes toward Native Americans and that on most items seniors tended to be more positive than ninth graders. Mean scores, however, indicated no statistically significant difference between the two grades.

A positive correlation was found to exist between the score a student received on the attitude section of the survey and the score the same student acquired on information questions. This may indicate that increased learning can play a role in improving attitudes toward Native Americans.

Discussion

From their earliest pre-school years, children are confronted by movies,

cartoons, storybooks, toys and games which show Indians as hostile, primitive people. These materials often make no distinction as to the time period or the particular tribe protrayed. Consequently, children are led to believe incorrectly that all Indians are alike (and always have been) and that Indians today continue to live in the old ways. These stereotypes and misconceptions were substantiated by the responses of kindergarten and fifth grade children in a previous study.[1]

During his school years, the student then studies history, including that of the Native American, with the aid of textbooks which are written from the viewpoint of the dominant non-Indian society. American history books typically begin with the so-called "discovery" of America, implying that no cultures worth noting existed in this land prior to the arrival of Columbus. Virgil J. Vogel[2] points out that historians have used four principal methods to create or perpetuate false impressions of aboriginal Americans, namely:

1) Obliteration: merely ignoring some aspects of Indian history such as Andrew Jackson and the notorious "Trail of Tears";
2) Disembodiment: viewing the Indian as subhuman and thus an obstacle to be overcome;
3) Defamation: relating all the Indian's faults and none of his virtues plus misrepresenting his nature; and
4) Disparagement: denial of the great contributions of Indians to our culture.

The stereotyped and distorted images of Indians portrayed by the media and textbooks have two particular effects: First of all, non-Indians develop inaccurate images of Native Americans which affect their relationship with

1. League of Women Voters of New Brighton, Minnesota. Children's Impressions of American Indians. 1975.
2. Vogel, Virgil, Jr. This Country Was Ours, A Documentary History of the American Indian. New York. Harper & Row. 1972.

Indian individuals. Secondly, Indian people have difficulty developing a positive self-image. As a result, Indian children may experience low achievement expectations or learning difficulties in school. There are 157 known Indian children in the Mounds View School District. How the non-Indian students feel about Native Americans may well affect the learning of these Indian children.

A realistic portrayal of Native Americans should be incorporated into the entire curriculum to counteract the distortions found in so much of our society. The information gained through this study should be helpful to educators in identifying areas of content which need more attention. In responding to the survey, students indicated a desire to learn more about American Indians. (See Part III, questions 12, 13, 14.) In fact, seniors expressed even more interest than did ninth graders. This should be an encouragement to all who are involved in developing curriculum and teaching about Native Americans.

APPENDIX

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following books and magazines were used for documenting the information questions on the survey. The numbers following each listing correspond to the number of the question on the survey form included in the appendix.

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING AMERICAN INDIAN SURVEY

TO: Mounds View School District 9th and 12th grade teachers

Thank you for your help in giving this survey to your students. Following are suggestions for administering the survey.

A. Please write the following on the blackboard before the survey is given:

Questions 1-45: Answer True, False or I don't know

True	Box A
False	Box B
I don't know	Box C

Questions 46-71: Answer how you feel about each statement

Strongly agree	Box A
Agree	Box B
Uncertain	Box C
Disagree	Box D
Strongly disagree	Box E

B. Instructions to give the students before they take the survey.

1. Do not write your name on the survey.

2. Write the name of your school in box marked "School". Write your grade level (9 or 12) in "Name of Test" box.

3. Use a No. 2 pencil for marking answers.

4. Only one answer can be given for each question.

5. Do not write on the question sheet. This will be used by other students.

6. Explain the instructions as written on the blackboard indicating the change in answers for questions 46 through 71. A line has been drawn on the answer sheet to indicate the change in response.

NOTE: If a student has questions about a word or concept do not clarify. Tell him to do the best he can. Point out that he can answer "I don't know" (questions 1-45) and "Uncertain" (questions 46-71).

AMERICAN INDIAN SURVEY

Instructions: Questions 1 through 45

Answer on your answer sheet true, false, or I don't know

For True -	mark Box A
For False -	mark Box B
For I don't know -	mark Box C

1. Most Indian tribes in the past were buffalo hunters.
2. Indians live only on reservations now.
3. Indians live in Minnesota now.
4. Indians like to share what they have with each other.
5. American Indians are citizens of the United States.
6. Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce cooperated with the government in moving his tribe to the reservation.
7. Some American Indians do not speak English.
8. The United States government has kept most of its treaties with the Indians.
9. In the past, Indians spoke the same language.
10. Most Indian children who live on reservations today attend government boarding schools.
11. In the past, Indians fought against whites to protect their own land.
12. The unemployment rate for Indians today is about the same as for non-Indians.
13. Indians who live on reservations do not pay taxes.
14. Much of the food we eat today was first domesticated and grown by American Indians.
15. Some American Indians want to stay on the reservation.
16. Red Lake Reservation is the only reservation in Minnesota where the land is totally owned by the tribe.
17. President Andrew Jackson did much to help the Indians.
18. Some American Indians wish to keep their traditional way of life.
19. Eskimoes of Alaska can receive benefits from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
20. When it was written, the U.S. Constitution recognized Indian tribes as sovereign, separate nations.

21. The family is very important to Indians.

22. Indians had an uncivilized way of life before Europeans came to America.

23. The land is very important in American Indian religion.

24. The average age of death for Indians is 45 years.

25. The first Americans have always called themselves "Indians".

26. Colonists in the 17th and 18th centuries were paid money for Indian scalps.

27. The suicide rate for Indians today is about the same as for non-Indians.

28. Indian tribes must get permission from the Bureau of Indian Affairs before they can spend their money.

29. Susan LaFlesche Picotte was the first Indian woman to become a medical doctor.

30. In the past, Indians roamed around, never settling in one place.

31. The Yakimas of Washington have the right to fish without a license on off-reservation land.

32. Indians spank their children a lot for disobeying.

33. Boarding schools for Indian children in the past encouraged the study of Indian language and culture.

34. Most reservations are located on land good for farming.

35. The Battle of Wounded Knee in 1890 was a massacre of Dakotah Sioux men, women, and children by American soldiers.

36. Some Indians feel the tribe, not the individual, should own the land.

37. Every year there are fewer Indian people in America.

38. The government of the Iroquois may have had an influence on the beginnings of the American government.

39. The major Indian tribes living in Minnesota today are the Ottawa and Menominee.

40. Indians who live on a reservation automatically get money from the government every month.

41. One of the results of the Allotment Act of 1887 was that Indians lost much of their land.

42. Termination of federal aid to the Menominee tribe was a success.

43. Indians living on reservations in Minnesota today have an average income of less than $1,000 a year apiece.

44. Sequoyah developed the Cherokee alphabet.

45. Bad treatment by whites was a major cause of the 1862 Sioux uprising in Minnesota.

Instructions for questions 46 through 71

Answer how you feel about each statement.

If you strongly agree	mark Box A
If you agree	mark Box B
If you are uncertain	mark Box C
If you disagree	mark Box D
If you strongly disagree	mark Box E

46. Going to school with Indians would be o.k. with me.
47. Indians drop out from school because they aren't smart enough to get through.
48. There is less prejudice against Indians in Minnesota than in South Dakota.
49. Indians make good neighbors.
50. Most Indians are drunk and lazy.
51. Since Indians made poor use of the land, it was good that the white settlers took it over.
52. Indians have many values which would be useful to all people.
53. Most people don't like Indians very much.
54. "Savage Indian" is a good way to describe Indians of the past.
55. Indians have contributed much to American life.
56. Most history books present a true picture of the Indian.
57. Treaties made with American Indians were fair and just.
58. There is no such thing as Indian culture today.
59. I don't like the United States government having to keep treaties 100 years old.
60. Indians should move to the city rather than stay on reservations.
61. Indians should try to be like successful whites.
62. I don't like the government spending money fixing up reservations when Indians just let their homes fall apart.
63. Non-Indians should pay a fee to Indians to hunt or fish on Indian reservations.
64. The Indian problem will settle itself without our worrying about it.
65. The Indians had good reason to make trouble at Wounded Knee in 1973.
66. Indians should be forced to give up the coal and oil on their reservations because of the energy crisis.
67. It's good that it is against the law in some areas to sell liquor to Indians.
68. Indians should preserve their cultural life-style.
69. I need to understand more about the American Indian.
70. I already know enough about the American Indian.
71. I don't care if I ever hear more about the Indian.